



# ON TRACK

The E-Bulletin of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

[www.marp.org](http://www.marp.org)

[marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com)

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*The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc. (MARP) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation established in 1973 to improve passenger train service, travel conditions for passengers, and to work for the preservation of historic rail stations.*

*Monthly meetings are held at locations around the state. Check the website for dates and venues. The public is invited to attend.*

## MARP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2014-2016

Larry Krieg	Chair
Jim Wallington	Vice-Chair
Jeanie Merckel	Treasurer
Rosemary Horvath	Acting Secretary
John Langdon	Governmental/Public Affairs Coordinator
Kathleen Newell	Membership Coordinator
Kay Chase	Communications Coordinator
Adam Tauno Williams	Meetings Coordinator
Don Monteith	Northern Region Chair
Robert Patterson	Detroit/Metro Region Chair
Warren Fritz	West Region Chair
Steve Vagnozzi	East/Central Region Chair

*The Michigan Passenger Editor and Webmaster, Larry Sobczak*  
*ON TRACK Editor, Kay Chase*

## 2015 MEETINGS

**10 January** – Lansing's former Grand Trunk Depot with Special Guest Speaker Bob Johnston, writer for TRAINS Magazine

**February** – Cancelled

**14 March** – Kalamazoo, 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church

**25 April** – Ypsilanti Depot Freighthouse

**16 May** – Durand Union Station

**20 June** – Crossroads Village

**25 July** – Amtrak Exhibit Train at Grand Rapids Amtrak Station

**29 August** – Executive Committee

**19 September** – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station

**10 October** – CMU Research Corporation Mt. Pleasant

**21 November** – Okemos Public Library

**December** – no meeting

Visit [www.marp.org](http://www.marp.org)  
Email [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com)

# Season's Greetings



The Four Flags Garden Club will host the **24<sup>th</sup> Annual Hometown Christmas Celebration** at the Historic **Amtrak Depot in Niles** on December 6, from 4:30 – 6:00 pm. The depot will be festooned inside and out with fresh greens, window topiaries, wreaths and handmade ornaments on a Fraser Fir Christmas tree. Musical entertainment will be provided and Santa and Mrs. Claus will drop by with cookies, cider and candy. A special drawing will be held at 5:45 p.m. for 2 round trip tickets, compliments of Amtrak, from Niles to Chicago.

**Dowagiac**, too, is welcoming visitors with lights on the depot, thanks to the efforts of MARP member Ron Leatz. Dowagiac's lights glow from November 9 through March 9, brightening the way throughout the winter for Michigan train passengers.

*There will be no December member meeting.  
All of us on the MARP Executive Committee  
wish you and yours a safe and joyous  
holiday season.*

## MARP Approves Bylaws Changes

The November 21 MARP membership meeting was held at the Okemos Public Library. Twenty-three members and guests braved the season's first snow storm to gather in the library's well-appointed community room hung with colorful and whimsical quilts created by local quilters. Among the guests were two visitors from Woodstock, Ontario: Dixie and Ken Westcar. Ken is a board member of **Transport Action Ontario** and both are active in the Southwestern Ontario Transportation Alliance [swota.ca](http://swota.ca) and the Rail Users' Network [railusers.net](http://railusers.net)

Rep. Tom Cochran, whose House District 67 encompasses East Lansing, Williamston, Mason, Leslie and south Lansing, spoke briefly. He serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Stating that he voted against the recent package of transportation funding bills passed by the legislature, he pointed out that the need for a \$1.2 billion dollar boost in funding was identified 5 years ago but won't be fully realized for another 5 years. Rep. Cochran supports the expansion of train services, adding that reliability is absolutely key to future success. Robert Patterson urged Rep. Cochran and his colleagues to take advantage of the experience and knowledge that MARP has to offer. Rep. Cochran, in turn, asked that MARP show up at committee hearings, saying that legislators do pay attention to their constituents. Also present was Kathleen O'Reilly Farhat, who serves as Chief of Staff for State Sen. Curtis Hertel, Jr., whose Senate District 23 includes Lansing, East Lansing, Mason, Williamston and Leslie.

The major order of business for the day was the approval of the revisions to the Bylaws. In advance of taking a vote on the Bylaws revisions, Chair Krieg reviewed sections where substantive changes are recommended: (1) expand the Statement of Purpose (Article II) to make clear that MARP seeks to represent the interests of the traveling public to, and maintain relations with, the various transportation providers (MDOT, Amtrak, bus companies, transit agencies); (2) a new article outlining criteria and guidelines for expulsion of members (Section 3.4); (3) more clearly defining the duties of the officers, regional chairs, and at-large executive committee members (Article V); (4) addition of Section 7.4 to allow designation of other agents (MARP's webmaster is considered an agent); (5) establish procedures for adopting an annual budget and dispersing funds (Article XII). Other less substantive changes were made to clarify language or procedural matters. Following brief discussion, the Bylaws revisions as recommended by the Executive Committee were adopted unanimously by the members in good standing present at the meeting. Hugh Gurney, as chair of the Bylaws committee, was

*(BYLAWS continues in next column)*

## MARP Partners With Midwest High Speed Rail

What if there were a train departing Kalamazoo every hour headed for Ann Arbor or Detroit or Chicago? That is one of the ideas stakeholders along the *Wolverine* line will explore at the first of a series of meetings arranged by MARP and MHSRA at the Niles District Library, 620 E Main, Niles MI, on Tuesday, December 2, 7:00 pm.

The Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac corridor possesses a number of unique characteristics that bolster such a bold vision. Assets located along the route include three major universities, a number of private colleges, a strong manufacturing base, headquarters of several international corporations, major medical centers and world-class cultural institutions. Ridership growth has been strong over the last decade. Most of the route through southern Michigan is owned and controlled by Amtrak or MDOT, has little freight traffic, and has already enjoyed a significant investment to improve operations.

Questions? Send email to [marprail@yahoo.org](mailto:marprail@yahoo.org).

Information about the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Train Corridor study is at [GreatLakesRail.org](http://GreatLakesRail.org).

*(BYLAWS continued from previous column)*

commended for what turned out to be an arduous process spanning two years. The revised Bylaws will be posted on the MARP website.

In other business, Adam Tauno Williams, recently selected to fill the At-Large Executive Committee position responsible for planning meetings, asked that members contact him with suggestions for meeting venues and programs. Email Adam at [awilliam@whitemice.org](mailto:awilliam@whitemice.org).

Steve Vagnozzi, East/Central Region Chair, asked for volunteers for his Station Care Committee. Steve asks that members let him know of any concerns about stations, such as lack of signage. He and John Langdon will then determine how and when to work with Amtrak or MDOT to address the issues. Another function of the Station Care volunteers will be to keep unstaffed stations supplied with Amtrak time tables and other literature. Longer term, MARP, working with Amtrak and MDOT, could institute a system of station hosts to assist passengers at unstaffed stations. Contact Steve at [svagnozzi@comcast.net](mailto:svagnozzi@comcast.net).

The meeting finished up with an interesting slide show prepared by MARP's official photographer, Steve Sobel, showing the progress of track work stretching from West Detroit to the new station in Dearborn.

## MARP Welcomes New Members

During 2015 MARP has welcomed 43 new members, 4 of them from out of state. This brings the total number of members to 302 and includes members in 11 states, 2 Canadian Provinces, and England. Complimentary memberships were given to six persons who spoke at meetings during the year.

*A note to our new members:* If you are not receiving meeting announcements or the monthly issue of **ON TRACK: The E-Bulletin of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers**, it is likely because we do not have your email address. If that is the case, please send an email to [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com) and we will gladly add your name to the list. You may be confident that we do not share our email lists with anyone.

A big thank you, as well, to all who renewed their memberships this year. Your continued support will make a difference as we move into our 43<sup>rd</sup> year of working to improve and expand passenger train service in Michigan.

Remember, too, that if you would like to meet up with other members in your area or arrange ride-sharing to meetings, you can always send an email to [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com) or contact your regional chair:

### Northern Region

Don Monteith

231-675-1608 [damonteith4@gmail.com](mailto:damonteith4@gmail.com)

### Western Region

Warren Fritz

269-998-4308 [wrfritz41@gmail.com](mailto:wrfritz41@gmail.com)

### East/Central Region

Steve Vagnozzi

517-349-4889 [svagnozzi@comcast.net](mailto:svagnozzi@comcast.net)

### Metro Detroit Region

Robert Patterson

313-836-3736 [ridethetrainmich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ridethetrainmich@sbcglobal.net)

### New Members in 2015

Richard Watkins	Ann Arbor, MI
Richard Brown	Bloomfield Hills MI
Giovanna Tessmer	Brighton MI
Mark Daniell	Chesterfield, MI
Mary M. Dubensky	Dearborn MI
Vera I Boyd	Detroit MI
Timothy Hinkle	Detroit MI
Vincent & Carol Schumacher	Grand Rapids MI
Adam Tauno Williams	Grand Rapids MI
Charles Ausberger	Grand Rapids MI
Michael Hale	Grand Rapids, MI
Paul Martin	Grosse Ile MI
Tom Purmort	Holland MI
James Sawyer	Jackson MI
Steve & Cindy Charnley	Kalamazoo MI
Frank Zajac	Kalamazoo MI
Barbara Abbott	Lake Leelanau MI
Elizabeth Green	Lawrence, MI
Charlene Zdanio	Macomb MI
Casey Anderson	Mason MI
Mike Smith	Muskegon, MI
Robert McLean	Novi MI
Darryl Apps	Okemos MI
Lou Fleet	Paw Paw, MI
Karl Pallada	Pullman, MI
Dalton Noren	Rochester MI
Thomas J Cusummano	Royal Oak MI
Arthur Kuhn	Saginaw MI
Richard Brown	Saline, MI
Christine Valentine	South Haven MI
Bill & Sue Sikora	Sterling Heights MI
Buz Zamarron	Traverse City MI
Karla Stretten	Traverse City MI
Bradley Socier	Troy MI
James C Erisman	Westland MI
Joseph Rivers	Ypsilanti MI

### Out of State

Charles E Welsh	St Louis MO
Derrick L James	Chicago IL
Mark Walbrun	Chicago IL
Alan Corbitt	Toledo OH
Robert C Vanderclute	Ormond Beach FL
Eldeen Carpenter	Milwaukee WI

### Complimentary Memberships Given to Speakers

Bob Johnston, TRAINS Magazine  
 Joseph Mishler, Railroad Historian  
 Shasta Duffey, Grand Elk Railroad  
 Liz Treutel, Michigan Environmental Council  
 Chris Bagwell, Great Lakes Central Railroad  
 Erin Strang, Central Michigan University Research Corporation



## CHRISTMAS DINNER AT DURAND UNION STATION

**Phone 989-288-3561 for Reservations**

The Depot is hosting a Christmas Dinner at 6-9 PM on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> and Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy the display of 50 illuminated Christmas Trees while dining with friends and family in this beautiful historic depot. Tickets are \$18.00 per person, \$16.00 for DUSI members, \$12.00 per child under 10, and \$130 for a table of eight.

Other Holiday events include a Wine Tasting on Saturday, December 12, 6-9 PM  
 and a Coffee Tasting on Sunday, December 13, 1-3 PM

For information, phone 989-288-3561



### View from elsewhere . . .

*"Corktown is on its way to being a vibrant neighborhood where people live and play close to the downtown center – and to get to the next level we must re-imagine Michigan Avenue . . . to build on the momentum of what's been going on in Corktown, we have to make it a place that serves residents as well as visitors, and that's where walkability comes in."*

— Dave Steinke, co-owner of the Mercury Bar and Ottawa Via, quoted in an [mlive.com article](#). Other thriving businesses in this revitalized Detroit neighborhood include Slow's Bar BQ and Gold Cash Gold.

*"I'm very pleased to be here to support this project. That track goes right through the campus of Alma College. We could pack students up and easily send them in any direction. It would be a lot easier than them having to drive."*

— Alma Mayor Mel Nyman, commenting during a standing room only meeting of the Mt. Pleasant City Commission that heard James Bruckbauer tell of plans for a passenger train linking Traverse City to Ann Arbor, the [A2TC Project](#). Read more [HERE](#).



Daisuke Hughes, co-owner of Astro Coffee, and Chad Rochkind, organizer of the People First Project

Photos by Matthew Lewis

### "Parklet" in Corktown

For a short time this fall, a parking space in front of Astro Coffee in Detroit's Corktown was transformed into a "parklet" where people could gather to chat and relax. Daisuke Hughes, coffee shop co-owner, and organizer Chad Rochkind collaborated on this **"tactical intervention"** with the hope of beginning a conversation about ways to create a more people-centered neighborhood.

For a fascinating account of how Michigan Avenue grew to its current intimidating proportions – along with the saga of the Detroit subway approved by the voters but never built - see [The Widening of Michigan Avenue](#), by Paul Szewczyk.



### OUR ADDRESS HAS CHANGED



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### Contact Your Lawmaker

Congressional Switchboard  
202-224-3121

**Sen. Debbie Stabenow**

**Sen. Gary Peters**

**Find Your Congressperson**

**Find Your State Senator**

**Find Your State Representative**